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SERMON XXI.

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THE IMMOVABLE KINGDOM.

"We receiving a kingdom which can not be moved."—HEBREWS 12: 28.

THERE is a general analogy that obtains with all the works of God—amid all their variety and grandeur, there are still outlines of resemblance. The ancient temple service of the Jews, for instance, was declared to be a pattern of the arrangements of the heavenly world. And so even human governments, imperfect as they are, may be regarded as types of a higher government or kingdom—foreshadowings, like the temple service, of better things to come. And while the kingdoms of this world are now clashing and convulsed around us, God in mercy is summoning our attention to another and better kingdom—the kingdom of Christ in its presence and power among men. Let us turn aside for a moment, and consider it.

It is important that we form a clear idea of the nature and design of this kingdom.

The principal idea involved in the word, is government—the administration of government on the part of those who are qualified for the office, and submission to that government on the part of those who sustain the relation of subjects. A community thus associated and upheld, is a kingdom.

Every kingdom must have its lawful head or representative. God has made him—that wonderful Being, who once appeared in this world—Christ, “Head over all things to the Church.”

Every kingdom must have its laws—those principles and institutions which define and protect the relations of all parties. A nation without law or order of some kind, is like the body without a healthy circulation of the blood; if it is not dead, it is every moment exposed to death. With such an explosive magazine of passions as human nature carries, even an imperfect government is better than no government at all. The kingdom of Christ, then, has its laws, which define the relations of its subjects; and these laws are set forth and explained in the New Testament. And as far as our duty is concerned, all may be summed up in a word: a spirit of loyalty and entire submission to Him who is the great Head of this kingdom. The act of repentance for sin, what is this but the submission of the once proud and rebellious soul? The initiatory exercise of faith, in accordance with the law, “He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved,” what is this but the oath of loyalty and submission to Christ? And the whole subsequent life of a believer is the same continued exhibition of obedience and loyalty. With Christ above, and the Bible before, and the world around, the believer has but one rule of action: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” From beginning to end, the whole life of faith and religion is this loving and loyal submission to Him who is the King of kings.

Resting upon this basis—a basis established in the work and sacrifice of Christ, and embraced in the faith and obedience of man, this kingdom, like every other kingdom, proposes its definite end and mission. That end is, in this case, commensurate with the vastness of the means it employs, and the dignity of its great Founder. It is nothing less than the deliverance of man from all the difficulties of his position, and his perfect restoration to happiness and life; in a word, it is the salvation of human nature—human nature in all its parts and relations. All the forms and relations of our secular life, this kingdom pervades and purifies, as the subtle electric fluid pervades and purifies all material substances, without interfering with their forms. And laying its foundation in the principles of faith and love in the soul, like the leaven, it works out, and embraces even the physical life—the body which it reconstructs and saves in the morning of the resurrection. The

kingdom of grace on earth, expanding and brightening into the kingdom of glory in heaven. And what it does for one, it does for all who will embrace it. The privileges and blessings attached to mere human organizations, are necessarily limited; but the provisions of grace in the Gospel are inexhaustible, like the waters of the ocean, which no line has ever fathomed—like the superincumbent ocean of the atmosphere, which succeeding generations have always found fresh and unwasted. The foundations of this kingdom are strong enough to bear all who will rest upon it; the walls of this kingdom are wide enough to embrace all who will fly to them for shelter. And by the gracious purpose and appointment of God, all these unspeakable benefits and blessings are attached to the simple submission of the soul in the exercise of repentance and faith. This is the act of citizenship to which all is promised. "We receiving a kingdom which can not be moved;" not founding and building up this kingdom for ourselves, no! but simply receiving what another, God in Christ, has himself provided and offered. "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as believed on his name." This acceptance in faith of the grace of God, is the power which now exalts and ennobles our life. And, to use the expressive and beautiful words of Isaac Taylor, this appropriation of the personal affection of the Redeemer to his people, is the secret of dying. Christianity, says that distinguished writer, meets us where we most of all need its aid, and meets us too with the very aid we need. It does not tell us of the splendors of the invisible world, but it does far better when, in three words, it informs us that to loosen from the shore of mortality, is to be with Christ.

And with this glance at the origin and meaning of the kingdom of Christ, we are led to consider more attentively that peculiar feature and crowning excellence which places it in such marked contradistinction to all human systems—its lasting and immovable character. "We receiving a kingdom which can not be moved."

When it is said that this kingdom can not be moved, it is not meant that the forms or outward expressions of it can not be moved. It is with this kingdom of Christ as a whole, just as we find it to be with every individual member of it. The life of the believer in its outward form and condition, is constantly changing—his external circumstances; the fluctuations of religious feeling; and above all, that great change of form and outward condition, which in death moves the soul quite out of the body. So with the entire Church or kingdom of Christ: its outward forms and expressions have been frequently changed. The form of worship has been moved and altered again and again. Abraham, the father of the faithful, worshiped in a different form from Moses. The splendid ritual of Judaism, has in turn given place to the simpler ordinances of the Gospel. And even these simple forms of Christian

worship will be changed. This last change, it is true, will not be inaugurated until He, the author and object of all worship, shall come himself to order it. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." "Showing forth the Lord's death till he come." "And, lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world"—teaching evidently the perpetuity of the present worship and ordinances of the Gospel, to the end of time. So that, while we remember that the spirit is the essential feature, let us also remember that, as long as the present world shall stand, the present forms of religious worship must stand. And let us never seek, by any attempted departure from these forms, to be wiser than the Bible, or more spiritual than Christianity. And yet, at the appointed time, the present, like the previous forms and expressions of religious life, must be moved and abolished.

The meaning of the passage, then, is that the kingdom of Christ, in its power, and spirit, and substance, will never be moved. And the reasons of this are obvious.

The principles on which this kingdom is founded, are pure and perfect.

The laws which uphold it, are in perfect accordance with the decisions of truth and justice, as those decisions exist in the Divine mind. And therefore, as these foundations of the kingdom can not be moved, the kingdom itself can not be moved. If we take the best governments that have ever existed upon earth, in their laws and principles of administration, they are imperfect—at best but tolerable compromises between a thousand conflicting prejudices and passions. They must be so; for even if sanctioned by God, they yet originate with man, and partake therefore of the imperfection that attaches to every thing human. And by an inevitable law, this very imperfection necessitates their change and decay. "That which is in part, shall be done away." These kingdoms of the world are but "in part," partial, imperfect, and therefore only temporary arrangements.

But the principles of the Divine government in the Gospel are perfect, and therefore imperishable. The laws of faith, and love, and holiness, are not, like human statutes, true to-day, and false to-morrow; applicable in one age, but obsolete in another; they are laws always true, and of universal application, the same in all time and all ages, because they are expressions of that Infinite Mind which itself fills all time and all space. And, therefore, being in themselves always true and unchangeable, these laws must communicate their own nature to the souls which receive them, and stamp their own lasting and imperishable character on the kingdom which they rule.

In addition to the perfect and immutable character of its laws, this kingdom urges its claims, and lays its foundations in that part of human nature which is indestructible. In the very act of calling and gathering its subjects, it contemplates them as immortal beings. Mere human governments have nothing to do with these questions and principles. Lawgivers have indeed taught the expediency of insisting upon a future life, in order to restrain the passions of men. So when the French Terrorists decreed that death was an eternal sleep, Napoleon, when he overthrew them, decreed that they were wrong—as if the laws and purposes of God were in abeyance to the decrees and opinions of men. But the ends which human governments contemplate, do not necessarily involve any form of religious belief or disbelief. Men are good citizens or bad citizens—not as they think and feel as to the realities of another world, but as they obey or disobey certain arrangements of society.

Earthly governments, then, from their very nature and sphere of action, are temporary arrangements. They meet a present want in a present visible world; and then they pass away, and disappear under that law of change and dissolution which attaches to every thing in this world. The strong and the weak; the refined and the rude; however they may fluctuate, and rise and fall, some a little higher and others a little lower on the restless waves of time, all are wrecked and merged at last in those dark lethean waters of oblivion. But the religion and kingdom of Christ rests upon an entirely different basis. It seizes that which is firm and lasting in man—his soul, his immortal nature; and there it builds its foundation of faith; and there it plants its standard of holiness; and there it wields its scepter of love. So that although the subjects of this kingdom may die, this kingdom itself must be as strong as that immortality which can never die—that immortality on which it is founded, and which, by its power and grace, it has built up into a monument glorious and imperishable.

Another element of permanency in this kingdom is the harmony that obtains between its members. Sin is the grand disorganizer, and therefore the universal destroyer. The kingdoms of the world can not hold together, because they want this unity and harmony. They are made up of conflicting and discordant elements. It is true of the happiest families, and the strongest governments, what is said of the Austrian empire, against which the blows of Napoleon are now thundering—it is made up of so many different nationalities, that it can not hold together. So with the best states and societies in this world; they carry in their bosom so many conflicting prejudices and passions, so many antagonistic principles, that by this perpetual friction and clashing, they must, sooner or later, fall to pieces. But with the kingdom

and religion of Christ, all is harmony and order. The principles upon which this kingdom is founded, are not only pure and perfect in themselves, but they are uniform and invariable in their application. The elementary principle of faith in Christ, and submission to the Gospel, is the same with all; they bind, therefore, each heart that receives this law, to every other, and all, in one harmonious body, to the one Lawgiver and Saviour. Before Moses, God preached the Gospel to Abraham; before Abraham to Adam. The faith of the ancient Patriarch, who worshiped on the burning plains of Mesopotamia, or the faith of the pious Israelite, who bowed before the mysterious Shechinah, was the faith of Paul, when, on the same Syrian desert, and under the same burning sun, he bowed before the same glorious presence. And the faith of patriarch, apostle, and martyr, is the faith which now warms the heart, and kindles the eye of every true believer. The most ancient and the most recent, the most illustrious and the most despised, are all one—one body in Christ. As the planets of our system, however they may differ in size, and in their relative distances from each other and the central sun, are yet one—one system, in the common movement which all make in obedience to the common law of gravitation; so the innumerable souls, that in all ages of the world, and in all parts of the spiritual horizon, have turned to Christ, are one in obedience to the same common center of attraction. Jesus is that central Sun; faith in him, the universal light; love to him, the common principle of attraction.

Such a system, then, carries in its very order and harmony, all the elements of stability. Why then change or move it? The solar system, according to the observations of astronomers, has not varied, in its annual movements, the fraction of a second for thousands of years—such is the wonderful order and equilibrium with which the hand of the Almighty has balanced it. But according to the standard of comparative value given by Christ in the words, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" we may infer that the system of redeemed and regenerated souls, that have been gathered together in Christ, as far transcending in value the splendors of the material universe, as these shining orbs of heaven eclipse the twinkling lamps of an army of glow-worms in a tropical forest. And if that which is material, is so firm and lasting, what must be the stability of that which, in its very nature, is spiritual and heavenly? We are told that this system will survive the wreck of every other. The earth and all its works shall be burned up; the heavens, with all their apparent immovableness, shall pass away; but this kingdom "can not be moved;" because God, who prepared it, "can not be moved"—"in Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" because Christ, who laid its foundation in his own blood, "can not be moved"—he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for-

ever;" because faith, and hope, and love, the principles on which it is founded, "can not be moved," but must bind the souls that cherish them with links of celestial beauty and imperishable strength, to Him who is the Author and Finisher of our faith—that glorious and merciful Being who himself is perfect and uncreated Love.

In what contrast to every thing in this world does such a kingdom stand forth? The strongest empires that have ever existed, are like those glass drops which, cooling and forming in a state of uncertain equilibrium, the slightest touch may cause to explode. Of the best and strongest must be written, what Gibbon wrote of colossal Rome, the history of their decline and fall. At this moment, when Napoleon, like another Cyrus, is thundering at the gates of Austria, and under the walls of Rome; when the sword that is now gleaming along the defiles of the Alps and the Apennines, and from the Mediterranean to the shores of the Adriatic, may be the sword of retribution, that has sprung at last from the blood of the martyrs, the equilibrium of the strongest nations and the proudest systems, is trembling in uncertainty, and the present generation may live to see not only the map of Europe, but the face of the world changed throughout its length and breadth. We, in this country, may well thank God for the privileges we enjoy, and bless him especially that the waters of the Atlantic are rolling between us and the battle-fields of Italy. But the elements of change and decay are rife and busy every where. The world itself, with its equilibrium disturbed and broken by sin, must at last tremble and pass away under the shock of the coming judgment. But these changes, so far from affecting the kingdom of Christ, are the means, under God, of advancing it—the birth-throes by which it is introduced to the fullness of its power. "I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations will come." They have been shaken, and they will be shaken again. "And yet again I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." The mount where the law was given, shook and trembled; the hearts of the people that stood near, shook and trembled; the splendid fabric of Judaism was at last shaken and dissolved; the earth itself trembled under the pressure of the uplifted cross; and the heavens shook and darkened as they looked on in sympathy. But all this was only "the removing of those things that may be shaken, that those things which can not be shaken, may remain"—the falling away of the scaffolding, that God's own building might remain—the expiring groans of the old creation, and the introduction of those new heavens and that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered his voice, the earth melted." But in contradistinction to a changing and dissolving world, the Psalmist places the immovable kingdom of Christ. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved;

God shall help her, and that right early." But one city will survive the universal conflagration—the city whose builder and maker is God. But one kingdom will emerge from the universal wreck—the kingdom of truth and righteousness. Assailed again and again, it has seemed to tremble more than once on the very verge of ruin. The strong arm of military power; the poisoned shafts of infidelity; the success of a proud though superficial philosophy; the pride of the intellect, which in all ages has sought, in its littleness, to fathom the deep things of God, and the enmity of the heart, that in all ages has revolted at the restraints of the Gospel; the daring intruders into the hidden things of God, and the bold innovators on the revealed plan of salvation; the host of speculators, dreamers, and fanatics, who ever since Christianity appeared, have settled around it, like an army of locusts, threatening to eat up every green thing; the rationalism of Germany; the monstrous superstition of Rome; the betrayal of apostates; the indiscretions and inconsistencies of good men—behold the fiery trial to which the kingdom of God and the religion of Christ, has been summoned.

The existence, and still more the progress of the Gospel under such circumstances, is as evident a miracle, as if the dead were continually returning to life, and the angels of heaven were visibly ascending and descending in the service of this kingdom. And if this is its stability now, we may form some idea of its permanence and glory hereafter. Now the communication between Christ and his people is imperfect, though real. The laws of this kingdom are hindered by the infirmities of its best subjects. And if, with all these hindrances, this kingdom rests so firmly on the promises of God, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," what will be its strength and beauty when, the scaffolding of time all taken down, and the imperfections of earth all removed, it shall stand forth at last in the light and lustre of that heavenly world, where we shall see the King in his beauty, and sit in the shadow of his glorious throne, and gaze on the scenery of that peaceful kingdom, which "hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to lighten it, for the Lord God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." This is the hope and prospect that brightens before every believer in Jesus Christ, and irradiates the horizon of the future with such unspeakable glory. Well may the apostle speak of it as "a good hope"—"that blessed hope," as if all other hopes were merged and forgotten in that one hope set before us in the Gospel. It matters little to ask the precise period of time, when this kingdom shall be introduced in its meridian glory—to determine whether the personal advent of Christ in his glorified body shall be pre-millennial or post-millennial. "The times and the seasons" are "with the Father." Our great solicitude should be to see that before death overtakes us, the millennium of faith and

holiness has dawned in our own souls. The one great fact stands forth, stamped and sealed with the signature of God's own hand, that our Heavenly Father has prepared a kingdom for all who cordially believe and accept the testimony he has given concerning his Son; that in a world of change and death, where, as some one has well said, there is nothing permanent in man but his inconstancy, we may cherish this blessed hope, all radiant with life and immortality. This is the great fact in the history of our race, which should engross every thought, and engage every desire.

"Oh! that hope! how bright, how glorious!

'Tis His people's blest reward:

In the Saviour's strength victorious,

They at length behold their Lord:

In his kingdom they shall rest,

In his love be fully blest."

SERMON XXII.

Delivered at the Academy of Music, New-York, February 13th, 1859.

BY REV. A. KINGMAN NOTT,*

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JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION.

I INVITE your attention to-night to a part of the eighteenth verse in the seventeenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles:

"He preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection."

When a Christian preacher faces an audience, the most of whom he greets for the first time, and may never greet again, he is naturally anxious to fasten upon some theme which shall bear with it the utmost of the burden of the Gospel. Such a theme is Jesus and His Resurrection from the Dead, for from the deserted sepulcher we may look backward upon Calvary, the Garden, the Temple, the streets in which he taught, the river in which he was baptized, the wilderness of temptation, and Bethlehem; and from it we may descry, in prospect, the ascending Lord and the descend-

* This eloquent man, the Rev. Abner Kingman Nott, the youthful pastor of the First Baptist Church, of this city, the successor of the Reverend Dr. Cone, came to his death by drowning at Perth Amboy, New-Jersey, on Thursday, the 7th July, 1859, at about three o'clock in the afternoon.

ing Comforter, the exalted mediatorial throne, and the troop of the redeemed going home to glory. It is the climax of the story of redemption. Without the Resurrection, all that goes before were vain, and of all that follows, it is the certain pledge.

When our Lord hung on the cross, the bitterest taunt that was flung upon him was—"He saved others, himself he can not save!" And they laughed in derision. It was true. The Saviour of others could not be a saviour of himself, and the arm that had been potent to rescue others from perdition, hung powerless in its own defense. He could not come down from the cross, because to do so would have been to belie the lessons of his life, and forfeit all his claims, to defeat the eternal counsel of Jehovah, give up the struggle with Satan just at the moment of victory, and thus betray His followers, and dash to ruin the last, best hope of a fallen race. And so the lion of the tribe of Judah was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and opened not his mouth.

He is dead. Go away, faithful women! He needs your care no longer. Soldiers, ye need not break his legs to insure death's work. It is done. Take him down from the cross—tenderly—he never harmed any body in all his life; take off the mock crown; draw the wet nails; compose his stiffened limbs, (how pale!) staunch the red blood; press down the lids over the staring eyes. What peace upon his countenance! "Father, forgive them!" those were his last words. See! his lips even now seem to be parted in the blessed utterance.

But he is dead! Weep, daughters of Jerusalem! Smite your breasts, O people! Confess the faith, convicted centurion, and cry out—"Truly this was the Son of God!" But it is all too late. Put him upon a bier; bear him away, for he is dead. A few faithful friends—no nodding plumes above him; no procession following after—save the unheard tread of the angels on the clouds; no requiem—save the unheard harps of the seraphs above. Shroud him; bind the napkin about his head, and lay him away. It is kind of thee, Joseph, to open thy new sepulcher; thou shalt have thy reward. Roll the great stone to the door; seal it with the king's seal, and set over it a guard.

Friends and enemies alike strove to keep Jesus in the tomb. The one rolled a stone to the door, the other set a zealous guard. But ye can not keep him, love nor hate!

The night passes away—and the day. The next day is the Sabbath, and the pious women regard its hours too sacred to be profaned, as by many modern Christians, even in visiting the cemetery. The sleep of Jesus is undisturbed. But it was the last Jewish Sabbath. With the earliest dawn of the first day, love speeds the women to the sepulcher. What astonishment! The stone is rolled away! the keepers fled, and in their place an angel! The grave-clothes are laid aside and the napkin by itself!

and Jesus—where is he? "He is not here—he is risen!" says the celestial being. "Mary!" speaks the Lord himself, "go tell the brethren." To Peter he appears. "The Lord is risen—is risen indeed!" Swiftly the word flies, and quickly beats each heart. No one asks when or how; no more can we. The greatest transaction in the history of our noisy world, be it known and remembered, was achieved in silence. No mortal ear heard, no mortal eye saw. The Lord came not in whirlwind nor in thunder, nor yet in still, small voice. Jerusalem slept on, while at some unknown hour, with the first faint blush of morn, Jesus calmly arose, unshrouded himself with deliberation, put aside his grave-clothes, folded the napkin that bound his head, laid it carefully away, and went forth a living man.

But while the mystery of the Resurrection is thus clothed in a glory which no man can approach, let us, as we may, draw reverently near unto the risen Jesus, and, catching the inspiration of his new life, drink it in until with Mary we cry, "Rabboni!" and with Thomas, "My Lord and my God," and shall believe in Jesus and the resurrection to the saving of our souls.

As the Resurrection of Christ is the center of all Christian doctrine, we may find in it, First, **THE CONCLUSIVE PROOF OF THE DIVINITY AND MESSIAHSHIP OF OUR LORD.**

It evinces Divine Power.—Here is a remarkable Being come into the world. His birth is miraculous; his childhood precocious. At twelve years of age he is teaching in the temple; at thirty he goes forth as a public preacher of the Gospel. Behold! At his word, disease flees and health blooms in its place. At his touch, the eyes of the blind are opened, the leper grows ruddy, the deaf man is made to catch the faintest whisper, and the lame man leaps like a deer. The wondering people say: We never saw it on this wise before! He walks on the sea—the liquid pavement yields him a solid footing; he whispers to the winds, and they are quiet; devils flee at his approach. Thus sporting with the elements and with the spirits of another world, who is this mysterious, mighty Being? The people say, with anxious wonder: What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? They stood by the grave of a buried friend, while the sisters wept inconsolably over his untimely loss, and they ventured to inquire: Could not this man who opened the eyes of him that was born blind, have caused that even this one should not have died? And "the Resurrection and the Life" stood with those he loved, weeping and groaning, when suddenly he lifted up his voice and cried: "Lazarus, come forth!" The dead man arose, and the awe-struck people went to their homes, saying: "We have seen strange things to-day."

This is the life of Jesus Christ, evidencing omnipotence in its every act, and thus furnishing a continued accumulation of testi-

mony to his divinity, the consummation of which we find in his resurrection. Dawning with his birth, shooting out in childhood, this evidence shines with a brighter and a steadier glow as life advances, radiates from the cross, and bursts from its temporary night in the full glory of its power. And the two rival wonders of our world are, first, that a *God* should die, and, second, that a *man* should lift himself from a rock-hewn sepulcher when dead, and thus prove himself to be the God-man, and Saviour of the world.

Christ's Resurrection proves his divinity again, *by establishing all his claims.* He that had said, "I have power to lay down my life—no man taketh it from me, I lay it down of myself," had also declared: "And I have power to take it again." None but Deity could, without blasphemy, have uttered this sublime self-assertion. And he claimed to be the Son of God, one with the Father, and rested the claim chiefly on his promised resurrection. "Destroy this temple," he says, "and in three days, I will build it again." They laughed him to scorn, and when that did not do, they crucified him, amidst hoarse cries of "Blasphemy!" But now he has proved that every word of those claims was true. He has done what he promised to do. He has risen from the dead, and the temple destroyed has been rebuilt. In making good those claims, he has invested every one of his words with divine authority, so that we who now search for truth, can receive him to-day as all which in life he professed, and in the resurrection proved himself to be, "THE TRUTH."

Modern infidelity has assailed the moral character of Jesus, upon the ground that, unless he was God, he was not a perfect human character, because he made claims for himself which no human being could assert without being convicted of arrogance or blasphemy. And the argument holds good, for, truly, unless Jesus was God, he was not a perfect man. But in the resurrection he made good those claims, and proved himself to be that which he had asserted, the living God from heaven.

The resurrection of Christ proves his Messiahship, *because it is the fulfillment of the prophecies respecting him.* Every event in Jesus' life was the child of prophecy, but the fulfillment of prophecy found its consummation in the forsaken tomb. That sepulchred body is so like the buried truth of prophecy. Its keepers well represent the Scribes and Pharisees who kept the sealed treasures from the people. In the resurrection of Jesus the seal was broken. The keepers became as dead men. "I am the door," Christ said. Then the door of prophecy was flung wide open, its treasures given to the people, its records made so plain that he who runs may read; the *world* was bid to come and see the place where the Lord lay, and all that long line of evidence coming down from the Garden of Eden to the Cross of Calvary, told that

Jesus was the Messiah of whom Moses and the Prophets spake. In this manner does the resurrection of Jesus prove to us that he was God and Messiah, even could we set aside the evidence afforded by his life and death.

We present before you a Being dead, and buried in the solid rock, sealed with the king's signet, kept by royal guards, who lifted himself by unassisted power on the third day, lived on earth for forty days, and then ascended to the clouds. We present before you a Being mysterious in birth, mighty in life, who, claiming to be one and equal with God the Father, either was such or was an impostor or a self-deluded fanatic, resting his claim on the promise that, killed and buried, he would rise again, and who did rise, as promised, and thus verified his claim and proved his teaching true. We present before you, finally, a Being, who was for four thousand years the theme of all the old prophets, answering every thing that was foretold concerning him, and giving, at last, the complete fulfillment in lifting himself from the dead. And if this does not constitute an evidence of the Divinity and Messiahship of such a Being, then it is incapable of proof; and the man who hears me, whether Jew or Gentile, and at this day can reject the testimony to the Divinity and Messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ, has had his heart hardened by some Satanic power, that he might not believe and be converted.

But the resurrection has for us another glory, and that in a typical sense. Every literal event in the life of Jesus has also a spiritual signification. Thus, his healing of the sick, the lame, and blind was only a representation of his readiness to heal the lame, blind, sick souls, and impart spiritual health. So is it in his resurrection. IT IS A FIT TYPE OF THE SPIRITUAL NEW BIRTH, which is therein set forth as no words could manifest it. Thus, as the Lord lay dead, not apparently, but really *dead*, so far as his mortal nature was concerned, so do the souls of all natural men lie spiritually dead; nor only so, but buried—some like Lazarus, some as the maid, some like Dorcas in the upper room. We go among our houses, and it is as among the Egyptians—"there is not a house in which there is not one dead." Friends and enemies alike conspire to keep them in the tomb. Outside they garnish it, but inwardly it is full of corruption. They clog the door which leads to life by a thousand hindrances. Satan's emissaries stand guard in legions ever wakeful, lest his victim should be stolen away. There are sinners in the world, *buried* in its fashions and follies, shrouded in its opinions and customs, so fettered and bound, that it seems impossible to break away from the imprisonment in which they lie. But, as to Jesus dead, there came the glory of the Father, which woke him from the dead; so there is a time in the history of many dead sinners when for them the morning of the Lord's day dawns. Some life-giving angel rolls away the stone,

and penetrates their rocky sepulcher. The breath of God breathes on them; a new impulse creeps through their lifeless frame. Their hearts begin to beat, their lungs to fill; there is *life* there, and Christian friends who mark the change whisper, "Behold, he prayeth!" that is, he breathes; just like a man supposed to be drowned, who breathes faintly once, to the joy of those who stand over him. At last their heavy eyes open, their dull ears listen, and if the emancipation be complete, by and by they lift themselves, rise to their feet, and glancing about them, saying, "This is no place for a living man"—forsake the tomb and go forth to breathe the free air of heaven, and mingle among the living; then looking on their grave-clothes and saying, "This is no proper vesture for a living man," cast aside their legal fetters, and run the way of God's commandments. Some, indeed, who are truly raised, have not courage to venture out of the stifled tomb, but dwell living among the dead, and some come forth bound head and foot, like Lazarus, so that they can neither walk nor talk. To such the Lord must say: "Loose him, and let him go!"

Following the risen life of Jesus, we shall find it a type of our new life *in its aspirations after God*. So soon as Jesus had risen from the dead, he wanted to ascend to his Father. He was content to remain on the earth only so long as was necessary to satisfy the world of his resurrection and give his parting blessing. When Mary grasped him with eager and affectionate hands, as if determined never again to lose him, he said, "Touch me not," that is, detain me not, Mary, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father," just as when we in our weakness and ignorance throw our arms tightly about the feet of our dying friends, their spirits aspiring to God, say: "Let me go, for the day breaketh."

"So a soul that's born of God,
Pants to view his glorious face;
Upward tends to his abode,
To rest in his embrace."

The new spiritual life irrepressibly rises to its Father in contemplation and desire, just so far as earthly clogs will permit, waiting upon earth only to do and suffer God's will, and looking forward to a death-bed as to a Mount of Ascension.

The new life of Christ is a type of the Christian's in its connection with the former life.—Christ risen was the self-same Jesus who had been before for years. Though there hung over him the mystery of the grave, and though a supernatural glory enveloped him, yet it was the same man who had lived and loved, who had wept and prayed, had talked and dined and toiled with his fellow-men, and suffered on the cross. It was the identical body which they had laid in the tomb. "Mary," he said, and she knew the voice. Peter recognized his features. And he was to them the same man he had ever been. So it is with ourselves when converted. We

are not so changed but that we preserve still identity with our former life. There were even the wounds on our Saviour's body, when he showed them his hands and his feet. Yours, trembling saint, may be a *wounded* life—but it is life!

There is yet more comfort here, for *the new life of Jesus is like our own in its apparent disappearance at times*. After Jesus had risen from the dead, he was not always in the conscious and observable exercise of his new life. Now he appeared to the disciples when gathered together with closed doors, and anon he had vanished out of sight. They sought to speak to him, but he was gone—"forever gone!" Forever gone! No. On the next occasion again he mysteriously stood in their midst, gladdening their hearts. So it is not impossible that a genuine spiritual life should have its ebbings and its flowings, its ghost-like vanishings; we had it; we search after it; we look into our hearts—they are empty, and we say: "It is gone, it is gone." Shall we say then, alas! that we are dead? Then, anon, in some unexpected moment, perhaps when we are gathered together, with closed doors, in prayer with the disciples, the new life which we had thought to be lost comes bounding back again, and swells every vein, filling our hearts to overflowing, and we know that we are born of God. Let us not say, then, Christian friends, that we are dead or never had life, because we have lost for the time the full sense of being in which we formerly exulted. No; repair rather to the Fountain of Life, drink a fresh draught, and let its vitalizing stream flow through your enfeebled frame.

For the new life of Jesus is but a type of our own, finally, in its *immortality*. Christ rose from the dead never more to die, because he had met death and vanquished him in his own dark domain. Henceforth, death hath no power or dominion over him. So spiritual life, being a spark of the divine nature, wane as it may, can not expire. As galvanized life is not real, so all base imitations will die; all sparks of human kindling will of course fade away and vanish, but the life born of God is as immortal as is the new life of Jesus Christ. Its thread, death can not sever nor eternity wear away. And thus have we found in the resurrection of Jesus a fitting type of our new life in the Redeemer.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IS A PLEDGE OF THE VICTORY OF HIS CHURCH.

What is true of the literal body of Christ is true also of his mystical body. Whatever he has done for himself he will do also for his bride, the Lamb's wife. The world wars against and crucifies the Church; again and again have her enemies pronounced her dead, and the powers of darkness held their mad triumphal orgies over her downfall; they have shrouded and buried her deep and sealed the stone, and her friends have mourned in secret; but when the day, the Lord's day for her has dawned, the few

faithful ones who have watched through the night of trial, have beheld her rise from her temporary sleep and go forth to victory, "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." Such has ever been the history of the Church. The dens and caves of the earth, the dungeons of the Inquisition, have given her a home, but she has grown lusty in them; she has fed on persecutions; her blood has flowed in rivers, but "the blood of the martyrs" has proved "the seed of the Church." Corrupted at Rome and hid in the night of the dark ages, she hailed the morning in the sixteenth century, when God waked up the spirit of the Reformers; fettered, and weakened, and chilled, in succeeding generations, God again supplied new life by the Wesleys and Whitefield, and on this side, Edwards, with the New-England Revival of 1745; and when in our own day again she languished, wounded, weeping, dying, buried in worldliness, God spoke to her once more, and gave her a resurrection morning. He brought her forth from stately stifled cathedrals and funereal formalities to the public platform, and the presence of the great people gave her strength to breathe lustily every day, instead of delicately once a week, and stirred up her laymen to an apostolic zeal and Christ-like activity. No; the Church can never be annihilated. She hath within herself the resurrection power which her Lord held in his mortal frame. With the wear of eighteen centuries upon her, she is a mightier power to-day than ever before. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved." "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her." Trusting in "Jesus and the Resurrection"—never had Conqueror such a watchword—she has the certain pledge of victory.

We may see, finally, in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ BOTH A TYPE AND PLEDGE OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE HUMAN DEAD.

Before the time of our Lord, the doctrine of a universal resurrection was generally unknown. No philosophical speculations ever fully attained unto it, and however elaborately drawn, they vanished at the test of faith. As a heathen orator and philosopher has sadly said of another, whom he admired and revered: "I know not how it is; while I read I assent, but when I have laid aside the book, and within myself begun to reflect upon the immortality of souls, all that assent glides away." Paul was mocked for preaching it. "Why," said he, "should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead." But all the impossibilities attending the resurrection of the dead were buried in the Saviour's tomb when he left it. "If Christ rose from the dead, even so them also which are Christ's will he bring with him at his coming." "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." The pious Jew could not gather his harvest until he had laid the choicest and the best of it

as an offering on the altar of the Lord; then he might thrust in his sickle. So of the world's harvest. It could not be gathered until its first-fruits, Jesus Christ, the choicest, the perfect, had been offered in sacrifice to the Lord. That done—

"The angel-reapers may descend,
And Heaven cry 'Harvest Home!'"

And this, Christians, is the pledge of our resurrection from death, and all our hopes spring from that tomb—from which Jesus, rising, "brought life and immortality to light."

Over the intermediate state elapsing between *our* death and resurrection, hangs the same veil of mystery which rested on the tomb of Jesus during the three days of burial. We know not all, but this we do know, that when the world's long week is done, and that which is preëminently the Lord's day shall dawn to us, as it did to him, the Lord himself shall descend with a shout and the trump of the archangel, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. We shall know ourselves and be known as Jesus was among his friends, for Mary recognized his voice and Peter renewed the old acquaintance, and even Thomas was convinced of the identity of the Lord. So may we suppose that we shall know our friends; and Jesus! we shall know him, for we shall see him as he is, and behold his glory. If we have received any wounds for Jesus, it may be our glory to wear the honorable scars. I am sure I should wish to, to all eternity. I do not believe that the wounds of Jesus will ever be effaced, nor would I wish them to be. Let these eyes gaze on them eternally, in a mixture of love and adoration. John saw, as it were, a Lamb that had been slain from before the foundation of the world.

Never were gathered sincerer mourners than they who stood on Cavalry. Never tears flowed faster than upon his grave; never was body followed by heartier mourners, though so humble. Alas! alas! our Teacher, our Healer, our best Friend, our Saviour, our All, is dead—dead—dead. Alas! we had hoped it had been he who should have redeemed Israel! Woman's utmost devotion, man's strongest affection, and the proudest hopes that ever dawned on mortal vision, were pierced on the cross, and went down into the tomb with the corpse of the Lord Jesus. But when he rose did they not all come back again? Yes! Not one was lost, not one was dimmed. They loved more ardently than ever. Their hopes were infinitely brighter, and their faith firmer than ever before. So in the last day, not only shall our bodies and our friends in Christ be restored to us, but every joy and every hope and expectation that has gone down into the night of the grave shall be raised and given back to us. Graves are not dug in the earth alone, nor sepulchres hewn out of the solid rock. Graves

and sepulchers are every where. The air is full of them. They lie all along our pathway. Sometimes human hearts become but a charnel-house, where wander about only the ghostly memories of former but departed joys.

What become of all the joys and anticipations of youth that are chilled in the disappointments of maturer years? Whither go the idols that have been given up for God? Who takes those whom Death withers in early bud, such as our *Saviour* blessed? What become of all the sacrifices that are made and the gifts that are given for Jesus' sake? Do they perish forever? Is the world only a prelude in its disappointments, to the grand disappointment of eternity? Be still, wild heart! A voice says, "Verily, I say unto you, there is no man that hath left father or mother, or wife or child, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive manifold more in this life, and in the world to come life eternal." There is not a departed joy, or hope, or expectation of the Christian, but will be restored to him in the resurrection, as to the disciples in the resurrection of their Lord. I mourn not so much over the body or person of my friend who is gone, as I mourn over the loves and hopes that have been blasted and withered by the same touch of death and buried with him; but the resurrection of the Lord teaches me that there is a day to dawn when there will be restored to me in heaven all that I have loved and lost; and not more eagerly will I clasp to my arms the forms of those who are dear, than I will lay to my heart those blessed memories which I thought had gone perhaps forever, and which now have come bounding back to me. I care not what or how trivial they may be, they shall all come back! There will not to be a treasure over which the jealous eye of the Lord will not watch, and which his careful hand will not restore to the arms and fixed possession of his followers.

Nothing valuable, nothing dear to the Christian, is too trivial to be treasured by the Lord. Nothing good perishes. It is impossible. Out of the world's wreck, all that is worth saving will be saved. Every corner of the creation will be searched, the sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and death and the grave shall give up the dead that are in them. The trivialities of life!—who does not know, though he may blush to have it said, that the dearest and most intimate affections of the heart are often called forth by objects so slight that we would not have another know it—the little things which we have laid away in a corner of our hearts and upon which we doat so fondly? Has not a parent's fountain of tears been broken up by the sight of a little stray shoe, which once imprisoned a tiny foot that is since enshrouded in the grave? Who does not confess this element of our natures—not of human weakness, but of human power? In the great day of the Resurrection there will be nothing missing. The Jesus who, in the

mighty act of conquering Death, remembered to lay aside his shroud with care, and folded the napkin and put it away in a place by itself, will overlook nothing. The widow's mite will be returned a thousand-fold into her bosom as a mine of overflowing wealth. The cup of cold water given to a disciple will flow back a fountain of everlasting joy. Nothing, I care not whether it be a soft ringlet or the memory of a child's smile, that has been cherished by a saint of the Lord, but will be sacredly preserved, while the earth returns to chaos, and given back to him. Our cemeteries are God's conservatories.

Oh! then, what a glorious morn will the resurrection morning be! Methinks I see the glad procession coming up!—a multitude to which the throng I behold to-night is but a drop in the vast ocean, whom no man can number! I see them coming up in robes of white, with crowns of everlasting joy upon their heads and palms of victory in their hands. I hear their shout of gladness as they cry, "Victory! worthy is the Lamb that hath redeemed us!" Fathers and mothers grasp children long lost. Husbands and wives, separated many centuries, fall again in each others' arms. I hear a voice which calls my own name! I start as did Mary when Jesus gently uttered that word—"Mary!" That voice! I had dreamed of it all through my life, ever since my boyhood. I know it—and the child is clasped in the arms of its mother, who cries out, "My son!" and the child looks up and whispers, "Mother!" in the old familiar strain, and rests again in the bosom that gave it life. I behold these reunions; no one comes alone or empty-handed, but all go up with arms full and laps laden with treasures which the grave and the sea had buried, but which now are all restored forever with the coming back of Jesus.

Here, my friends, I would pause in the midst of this delightful and transcendent picture. But, did you ever think of this, *that our Lord, after his resurrection from the dead, had nothing more to do with the wicked?* He never spoke to one. No Pharisee ever argued with him more. No publican sat at meat with him. He said to no daughter of sin, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go and sin no more." No more sick were healed; no more dead raised. His work was all over. So shall it be in the resurrection of the dead. After that event, if you are not found in Christ and having a part in the first resurrection, Christ and the redeemed will have nothing more to do with you. All who are in Christ will be taken to be with him, and separated from you by a fixed and impassable gulf. And there now rises before me another scene of fearful nature; of weepings and partings, where fathers and mothers are torn asunder from their children, husbands and wives from each other, and pastors from their people, the one rising to glory and immortality, the other to everlasting shame and contempt. Have

you a friend in Christ who has died before you? Then he will disappear from your vision for ever and ever! Has an unbelieving parent a child who has learned to love the Saviour? Then will that child be placed forever beyond his or her reach or voice. In the lake that burns with fire, sinking always, crying out vainly for a messenger from the upper world to bring to him a drop of water, the victim of disappointment, the prey of remorse, the soul separated from all the redeemed abideth forever where is weeping and wailing and gashing of teeth, and the smoke of torment ascendeth forever and ever.

Nor only so, but as in the resurrection of those who have died in the Lord there will come back also every hope and joy and love, so to you a despairing voice shall say—"None of these things shall ever be yours, no, not so much as in the dream or vision of a moment." These blessings, lent to earth, belong not here but above, and in that day shall all take homeward wing to heaven. You shall lose them forever, for "the expectation of the wicked shall perish." The deluded wretch who sought the world and died disappointed will awake to everlasting disappointment. Nay, more than this; if there has been a moment of anguish in your life, if ever a pang of remorse has stung your heart, if ever an hour of deep sorrow, or the agony of hopeless despair, ah! *that* shall come back with evil power! There will be to you a resurrection of every evil thing experienced in the world, which will crowd upon your soul and go down with you to the abode of the lost, where home there is none. There is not a tear which has been wrung from your eye that will not then be wept over again; not a groan that has been heaved from your agonized spirit that will not then be groaned over again. Not an evil befalls you in life but is the precursor of sorrow to be realized in the eternal future.

Oh! then—flee, FLEE from the wrath to come! Lay hold on eternal life! Flee to the dying, the dead, the living Lord who ever liveth to make intercession for us. The harvest is passing, the summer will end, and when the autumn has come, and the wheat has been gathered into the garner, he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

SERMON XXIII.

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THE POSSIBLE AND THE IMPOSSIBLE.

"STAND still, and see the salvation of the Lord."—EXODUS 14 : 13.

"WORK out your own salvation with fear and trembling."—PHILIPPIANS 2 : 12.

THE first of these directions was given by Moses to the children of Israel, on the shore of the Red Sea. God had appeared gloriously for the deliverance of his people from their bondage in Egypt; he had brought them out with an high hand; he had led them along, under an infallible guidance—a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night—to the place of their present encampment. While resting here for a little space, the Israelites learned that Pharaoh, with a powerful army, was in hot pursuit of them, and was close upon them. What should they do? To flee was impossible; to resist was desperation. They could go neither forward nor backward; they could turn neither to the right hand nor to the left. In this dreadful emergency, the people began to do—what they were wont to do in every trial—they began to murmur against Moses and against God. "They said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us to carry us forth out of Egypt?" "But Moses said unto the people, Fear not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day."

The deliverance of the children of Israel from their cruel bondage in Egypt, was emblematical—and so it is represented in other parts of the Bible—of the deliverance of sinful men from a greater bondage—the slavery of sin, and the bondage of the wicked one. And as, in the progress of their deliverance, the Israelites soon came to a point where they could not help or save themselves; where they were to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord; so there is that, connected with the salvation of every sinner, which he has no power of any kind to do, which he is never required to do, which he is even forbidden to attempt, in reference to which he is to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

At the same time, there is that connected with the salvation of every sinner, which he *can* do, which he alone can do, which he

must do, and do himself, if it is ever done, and he is ever saved. Accordingly he is directed, in the other part of my text, to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

In addressing you from the Scriptures, which have been read, I propose to show,

I. What that is, connected with the salvation of the sinner, which he *can not* do, which he is never required to do, which he is forbidden to attempt; and,

II. What that is which he *can* do, which he *is* required to do, which he *must* do, and do himself, if it is ever done, and he is ever saved.

I. First, then, what is the impossible thing which the sinner can not do? And here (to come directly to the point) let me say, in a word: The sinner can not possibly make any amends, any expiation or atonement for his past sins. He has already sinned; the work is done; and now, to make satisfaction to injured justice, and in this way to save himself, is utterly beyond his power; for aught he can do to make amends, he is a ruined soul.

We know that sinful men, in their folly, have often tried to do this impossible thing. They have resorted to various expedients, with a view to make satisfaction, in part or wholly, for their sins. But such attempts have accomplished nothing; they have been altogether fruitless and vain.

Some have tried to make amends for the past, by a punctilious observance of rites and forms. This was the error of the old Scribes and Pharisees. By tithing their mint, and anise, and cummin, and by a vigorous adherence to all the forms of their religion, they hoped to do something towards making satisfaction for their sins, and thus lay for themselves a foundation of hope. And this is the grand error of the Romish Church, and of all the ancient Oriental churches, at the present day. The good Catholic is very strict to count his beads, and say his prayers, and cross himself, and make confession to the priest; and when he has done all this, he trusts to it. It is the foundation of his hope. And there is not a little of the same error even in our Protestant churches. How many there are, who are careful to perform what is sometimes called the round of religious duties; and then they feel as though they had acquired some merit; had made satisfaction, in part at least, for their sins; and laid the Almighty under some kind of obligation to appear for them and save them. But there can hardly be a grosser delusion than this, or one of more ruinous influence upon the soul.

Some have vainly tried to make amends for their sins, by tortures and penances, by self-inflicted bodily sufferings. We find this error, like the last, in the Roman Catholic Church. The pe-

nances there enjoined and endured are often of great severity, and they are undertaken for the express purpose of making amends for sin. The same error we also find in most parts of the heathen world. The heathen have often a deep sense of sin, and knowing no other mode of satisfaction, they resort to self-inflicted tortures and sufferings. Hence you may see one swinging, with a hook in his back; another sitting in an ant-heap, to be tormented by the ravenous insects; and a third immolating his child, or throwing himself under the wheels of his bloody idols. But all such endeavors are vastly worse than vain. They aggravate sin, instead of expiating it. They serve to swell the terrible amount, instead of washing it away.

Persons often think to make amends for sin, and recommend themselves to the favor of God, by convictions, good resolutions, and an outward reformation. This is the almost invariable resort of awakened sinners under the Gospel. Instead of despairing of all help in themselves, and going directly to the Saviour, they set about making themselves better, and getting themselves into a readiness to come to him. They make good resolutions; they break off from outward sins; they perform many religious duties; they think it necessary also to endure a certain amount of conviction and distress; and all this with a view to recommend themselves to the Divine favor, and prepare themselves to be accepted. But all such endeavors are soon found to be vain, and worse than vain; and the individuals resorting to them either become discouraged, and fall back into their former courses; or, despairing of relief from their own performances, they renounce them altogether, and do (what they should have done at the first) flee to Christ, and find joy and peace in believing.

Another class hope to cancel their sins, and stand accepted before God, on the ground of their morality. They know they are sinners to some extent; but they are careful to discharge the relative duties of life; they endeavor to perform more good deeds than bad ones; and they see no reason why *they* should not be accepted. Such persons have no idea of the enormity of sin, and of what it deserves at the hands of a holy God. They have no proper conception of their situation and prospects as sinners. Suppose them to be as good as they think they are; how is it possible that their good deeds should cancel the demands of justice, or any part of these demands, against their bad ones? Suppose them to be a great deal better than they think they are; suppose them now to become perfectly good, and so to continue to the end of life; would they be doing meanwhile more than their duty, and thus be cancelling aught of their past debt to justice? Not at all. Their debt, in this case, would be growing no larger, but it would be growing no less. It would still stand full against them, and for aught they could do to remove or diminish it, must sink them down forever.

In short, there is no way in which a sinner of our race can make the least amends or satisfaction for one of his past transgressions. He may do what he will; he may suffer what he will; his account of sin remains uncanceled, and he must meet it at the bar of God, and bear the just punishment of it forever.

Here then is the impossible thing of which I spoke. Here is a thing, and one indispensable to our salvation, which no sinner has power of any kind to perform.

And as we have no power to perform this thing, so we are never required to perform it. Nor have sinners under the Gospel any need or occasion to attempt the performance of it. It has all been done for them by the Lord Jesus Christ. He has made ample amends for their sins. He has made a full satisfaction. He bore their sins in his own body on the tree. His work of atonement was all finished, when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. I repeat then: sinners have no need to make expiation for their past sins. They are never required to do it; they are even forbidden to attempt it. It is precisely here that they are to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

Having thus shown what the sinner *can not* do towards effecting his own salvation, I proceed to show,

II. Secondly, what he *can* do. And here, as before, I choose to come directly to the point. Although the sinner can not make any amends or atonement for his past sins, he *can* accept the atonement which Christ has made for him. He *can* let go every other dependence and hope, and set down his sinking feet upon this sure and only foundation, which Christ has laid. He is indeed averse to such a surrender of himself into the hands of Christ. He lacks what has sometimes been called the moral power, that is, the inclination, the willing mind. And he needs the special influences of the Holy Spirit, to overcome the aversion of his heart, and make him willing. But all the requisite natural faculties—the ability, the power, in the most proper sense of the word power—he possesses. He *can* come to Christ, and put his trust in him, if he will. Accordingly he is invited in Scripture to come to Christ. He is exhorted to come. He is commanded to come. All proper motives are used with him to induce him to come. He is threatened with eternal perdition, in case he refuses to come. Yea, more than this, he is told expressly, and that, too, by the Saviour himself, that the reason why he does not come to him and receive salvation is, that he will not. “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” “How often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.”

These remarks are designed to show in what sense the sinner is *able* to come to Christ. He is able, in the sense of possessing all the requisite natural faculties, lacking only the willing mind.

They are designed also to show that, in the sense explained, man actually possesses [the requisite ability. He can not make satisfaction or atonement for his past sins; but he *can* embrace that atonement which Christ has made for him. He *can* come to Christ, trust in him, and receive forgiveness and eternal life.

This whole subject, in both its parts, is fitly illustrated by the case of the Israelites on the shore of the Red Sea. They had arrived at a point, in the process of their deliverance, where they could go no further. Something must now be done for them, which they had no power to do for themselves, or they were lost forever. They could not divide the waters of the sea. They were not required to do this. On the contrary, they were forbidden to attempt it. They were to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

But when God had interposed and divided the sea for them, now Moses calls out to the children of Israel to go forward. When the sea is divided, they *can* march through it. And not only so, they *must* march through it, and do this themselves, or they are not delivered. The mere dividing of the sea will not save one of them. They must obey the Divine command, and march through the opened waters, or the host of Pharaoh will be quick upon them, and they will be as assuredly destroyed, as though the sea had not been divided.

So the sinner, in the process of his salvation, soon comes to a point where he can go no farther. He comes to an insuperable obstacle, a thing impossible to him. He has already sinned; the work is done; and to make the least amends, satisfaction, or expiation, is utterly beyond his power. But, happily, this impossible thing the poor lost sinner is never required to do. He has no need to do it. It has all been done for him by the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made a full and complete atonement.

But now that the atonement is made, it belongs to him to accept it, to embrace it, and to build upon it his everlasting hopes. This he *can* do. This he is required to do. This he *must* do, or his deliverance is not effected. The atonement alone will not save him, unless he embraces it, any more than the mere opening of the sea would have saved the Israelites, had they refused or neglected to pass through the divided waters.

Suppose, when the sea was opened, and the command was given to the congregation of Israel to go forward—suppose they had treated this command, as sinners under the Gospel now treat the command to come to Christ and receive salvation. Suppose one had said: "Well, I think that we are all safe enough as we are; now that the sea is opened. The opening of the sea will save us, whether we go forward or not." And suppose another had said: "I do not at all like this method of being delivered. I am afraid to venture it. I do not feel any disposition to go through this

frightful looking passage; and how can I get a disposition?" And suppose a third had said: "Perhaps it is not decreed that I shall get over the sea, if I attempt it; and if not, it will be vain to make the attempt." And suppose a fourth had said: "There is no need of haste. The sea is opened, and we can go through at any time. Let us wait till a more convenient season." And suppose a fifth company had turned their backs upon the open channel, and attempted to ferry themselves over in some other way. Suppose, I say, that these Israelites had treated the command to go forward, in the ways here pointed out; and these are the very ways in which sinners treat the commands and invitations of the Gospel; what had been the consequence? Why, the consequence had been, that Pharaoh and his destroying army had been quick upon them, and not a soul had escaped their hands. And a more terrible consequence will speedily overtake ungodly sinners, unless they give up their vain excuses and objections, abandon their refuges of lies, and flee to the Saviour. This is their only hope. The Red Sea is fairly divided. The once insuperable obstacle between their souls and heaven is removed. Christ has died for them, and a full atonement has been made. If they go to him in faith, they shall have eternal life. But if they turn away from him, and refuse to embrace him, better had it been for them if he had never died, or if they had never heard and rejected the blessed calls and invitations of the Gospel.

The subject before us will help to explain what has been thought to be an inconsistency in the representations of Scripture, and in the preaching of faithful gospel ministers. There are many Scriptures, as every reader of the Bible knows, in which sinners are represented as in a lost and desperate condition; in a situation where they can not save themselves, where, unless help come from some other quarter, they are undone forever. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!" "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." On the other hand, there are Scriptures, in which it is represented that sinners have a work to do, in effecting their own salvation; in which they are even directed and exhorted to save themselves. Thus Peter, on the day of Pentecost, "testified and exhorted, saying: Save yourselves from this untoward generation." And Paul says in the text: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Now what shall we say to these apparently discrepant representations? Shall we say that the Bible is self-contradictory? And shall we say that those who faithfully preach the doctrines of the Bible—preach just as the apostles did—are chargeable also with self-contradiction? This many persons do say; but is it true? The preceding remarks show us how this whole matter stands. It is true, on the one hand, that every sinner is naturally in a lost condition. He is in circumstances where he can not save himself. Help must come to him from some other quarter, or he is undone forever.

But help has come from another quarter. The Lord Jesus Christ has died for sinners; a full atonement has been made. terms of mercy have been proposed; and they are invited to accede to them and live. And now we come to a point where they have something to do in effecting their own salvation. They must themselves accede to these proposals of mercy. They must embrace the provided atonement, and build on it all their hopes for time and eternity. This they are justly required to do. This they must do, and do themselves, or the provisions of the Gospel will be of no avail to them. Hence, with the utmost propriety, they are exhorted to deliver and save themselves, and to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

Thus we see that both parts of this great subject are true; both are important truths; and when rightly understood, they are harmoniously consistent the one with the other. There is no contradiction in the case; and none should ever be charged upon the gospel of Christ.

Again; this subject sets forth the blindness and perverseness of the natural man, in the efforts which he is inclined to make for his own salvation. We have seen what is the impossible thing in this matter, and what the required and necessary thing; what man can not do, and is never required to do, and what he can do, and must do, if he is ever saved. And now it is a remarkable fact, that just as soon as sinners are enough awakened to feel the importance of doing any thing for their salvation, they set about trying to do what they can not do, trying to do the impossible thing; while the thing which they can do, and must do, if they are ever saved, is the last which they will submit to perform.

The natural condition of the sinner is one of false security, and spiritual slumber, in which he does not trouble himself at all about his salvation. But when he is enough awakened out of sleep to feel the importance of doing any thing, the first thing which he attempts is to make some amends, some satisfaction for his past sins. He must do something to recommend himself to the Divine favor, something to improve and better his condition. He will try, if possible, to lay God under some kind of obligation to appear for him and save him. It is this kind of feeling which leads the Pharisee and the Romanist to their rites and forms; and the heathen to their self-inflicted tortures; and the legalist to his outward morality; and the convicted sinner to his good resolutions, and his endeavors to reform his life. And it is not, ordinarily, till every other expedient has been tried, and found to be fruitless, that the sinner consents to give all up, and falls down helpless, guilty, and lost, into the arms of his Saviour, to be saved by him, or not at all; to be disposed of by him as he shall see wisest and best. This is the point to which he must come, if he is ever saved; to which he ought to come at once; but to which, ordina-

rily, he will not come, till he has turned this way, that, and the other, and found that this is the only method of salvation. Nor even then would he consent to come here, were it not that an influence from heaven is brought to bear upon him, to bow his will, and break his heart, and bring him to the obedience of faith.

Such, then, is the blindness and perverseness of the natural man, in the efforts which he is inclined to make for his own salvation; trying to do what he never can do, and is never required to do, but is forbidden to attempt; while he is averse to the doing of that which he can do, and must do, and do himself, if it is ever done, and he is ever saved.

IN CONCLUSION, I have some advices to give to awakened, anxious, inquiring sinners, and

1. First of all, I advise you to cease at once, and forever, from all attempts to do the impossible thing of which I have spoken. Why should you labor longer in the fire, and weary yourselves for very vanity? Why should you persist in vain endeavors to do what you can not do, what you have no occasion to do, what you are forbidden to attempt? Why should you pour contempt upon the atoning blood of Christ, by turning your back on him, and striving to climb to heaven in some other way? No, cease at once and forever, from all such vain and fruitless endeavors. The only effect of them will be, to affront God, displease the Saviour, and grieve away the Holy Spirit.

And while you cease from all endeavors to do the forbidden and impossible thing, begin at once the doing of that which is required. Come right to Jesus. Come just as you are. He knows you are guilty, helpless, and lost, and such are the very ones whom he came to save. Such only are willing to accept of his salvation.

Do you ask, How shall we come to Christ? What is meant by the terms here employed? I answer: This coming to Christ is a much simpler thing, probably, than you imagine. It is a much easier thing than you imagine. There is no difficulty about it, except in your own hearts. The moment the consent of your heart is gained, it is all perfectly easy, and the work is done.

In order to come to Christ, in a way to be accepted, you must be convinced of two things: First, that you are undone without him; that there is no other help or hope for you. And, second, that he is an Almighty Saviour—just such an one as you need—able, willing, and waiting to receive you, and bless you with the tokens of his forgiving love. With these two great ideas impressed upon the mind—your guilty and lost condition on the one hand, and Christ's ability and perfect willingness to save on the other—you are to commit your sinking soul unreservedly to him. You are to fall, at once, into the outstretched arms of the Divine mercy. You are to say from the heart: "Here, Lord, I give my-

self away." My soul, my life, my all, I here commit and consecrate to thee. I desire to live no longer unto myself, but to him who loved me, and died for me.

To be able to say this, and to say it from the heart, is to put forth an act of saving faith. It is to come, at once, into the embrace of Christ. It is to become entitled to all the blessings of salvation.

And now, why should not every sinner come to this very point, and put forth, at once, this simple but saving act of faith? Is it not reasonable? Is it not right? Does not your own conscience require it of you? Does not gratitude urge it? Does not the Bible demand it? Is not its importance impressed upon you by the worth of your undying soul, and by all the preciousness of an eternal salvation? Why then do you hesitate? Why delay?

"Oh! come, ye heavy-laden, come,
Christ's instant help implore:
Millions have found a peaceful home;
There's room for millions more."

SERMON XXIV.

THE NATURE AND EVIDENCES OF GODLY SORROW.

"GODLY sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of."—2 COR. 7: 10.

ALL men regret, first or last, that they have sinned, but all do not become truly penitent and receive forgiveness. There is a sorrow for sin which is unto salvation, and there is a sorrow which is unto death; and not unfrequently those who perish, go through more tribulation to destruction, than those experience whose godly sorrow prepares them for heaven. The difference between godly and worldly sorrow, consists not in the degree, but in the nature of the sorrow.

The object of this discourse is to explain the nature, and illustrate the evidences of godly sorrow. The nature of godly sorrow may be discovered in the following particulars.

1. It is sorrow for sin.

The sicknesses, disappointments, and deaths, which mingle wormwood in our cup, and make us desolate, do not of themselves produce godly sorrow. It is sin which inflicts the wound, creates the anguish of spirit, extorts the tear, and causes the exclamation, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

2. It is sorrow of heart for having sinned against God.

It presupposes an apprehension of the divine excellence, a sense of obligation violated, of injustice done, of ingratitude exhibited. The consideration that God is independent, does not seem to cancel his rights, or absolve his subjects from their allegiance. It is felt that the rights of God are sacred, and the sin of invading them criminal, in the same degree as God is above all in power and glory, and his kingdom surpassing all other interests, in extent, duration, and blessedness. Once, he who now weeps would say: "What have I done so much against God?" No instruction could produce the feeling that there is any great evil in sin; but now the unbroken force of obligation presses upon the heart. The penitent sees that it is an evil thing, and feels it to be a bitter thing, that he has sinned against God, has made insurrection against the laws and peace of his empire, and his language is: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

3. Godly sorrow arises from love to God.

It is the result of friendship to God, and complacency in his character, laws, and government. "I have abused him whose being is infinite, whose attributes are perfect, whose kingdom is immense and everlasting, and whose laws for its protection and government, are holy, just, and good." This sorrow is the effect of divine illumination, which makes the presence and glory of God a reality, and wakes up in the heart a love stronger than death. It is this love which disarms the rebel. While Sinai thundered, he trembled and would have fled. Now he adores and weeps, and will trust in God though he slay him. It was love which produced that flood of tears with which Mary washed her Saviour's feet, and which made Peter hasten out and weep bitterly, for having denied his Master.

It is not the fear of punishment which constitutes godly sorrow. Ask the awakened sinner, why dost thou weep? and he will reply, I have sinned, and my soul is in danger. Ask the real penitent, wherefore dost thou weep? are not thy sins forgiven? and with quickened emotion he will exclaim, I weep because I have sinned against him whom my soul loveth, and because I still sin against the goodness and tender mercy of my God.

4. Godly sorrow includes aversion of heart to sin itself.

There is between sin and holiness an opposition of nature, which produces a repellency of feeling, when they meet in the same heart. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary, the one to the other. This aversion to sin would be felt by holiness, even though God did not require it. Sin in its own nature is evil, and holiness recoils with disgust from its polluting touch.

5. The ingratitude involved in sinning against God, adds poignancy to godly sorrow. The majesty of God fills the penitent with trembling; his benevolence with shame, for having set up a selfish interest in opposition to the glory of his kingdom; and the mercy of God, in providing a Saviour for a world of rebels, produces admiration and abasement. But when all this majesty stoops to deliver his own soul from death, and all this benevolence is concentrated upon his own heart, the penitent feels the burden of his iniquity to be intolerable. Then it is that the rock dissolves, and the tears flow.

Finally, godly sorrow includes a just sense of the debasement and evil brought by sin upon the subject himself.

Some of the evidences of godly sorrow will be found in the following particulars.

1. It is occasioned primarily and chiefly by the sins of the heart. Not because sins of action are not perceived and lamented, but because the sins of the heart are the most numerous, and the most grievous. "The Christian's heart is a world of iniquity. Here is the fountain of pollution, and if the streams flow out, beyond the boundaries of this dark empire, full well does he know that it is but a small proportion of the entire amount which ever sees the light of day. It may be received as a maxim, that the man who finds more occasions of sorrow in his life than in his heart, has not known his heart, and is not a penitent.

2. Godly sorrow is occasioned, and indicated, by a painful sense of relative deficiency in all good desires and affections.

When the penitent examines his heart with respect to his love to God, he finds it to be so feeble, compared with the love which the excellence of God should inspire, that it seems doubtful, sometimes, whether it has in fact any existence. This love is so inconstant also, compared with the undecaying ardor which is felt to be due, that he trembles lest all which has seemed to be love, should prove "like the morning cloud and the early dew."

3. Another class of sins of heart, whose painful influence occasions and indicates godly sorrow, is found in the depraved affections of the soul.

The evil affections, though enfeebled, are not extirpated by the introduction of holiness into the heart. They remain to contend with grace, and gain at times lamentable victories. Now it is selfishness that blinds the friend of God, and draws him wide from the path of rectitude; and now it is pride which lifts him up to fall into the condemnation of the devil. The world, unable by all its glory to seduce his Captain, spreads its treasures to the eye of his hesitating follower, and gains the wishful look, the rising desire, and at length the willing captive. Gain supplants godliness; the pleasures of sin, those of religion; and the praise of

men falls with more sweetness upon the ear than the praise of God. Unhappy fugitive from life, return to thy rest

4. Godly sorrow is occasioned and indicated by the apparent increase of indwelling sin.

It is a common expectation, that the commencement of holiness will be evinced by a perceptible diminution of moral evil in the heart; and that growth in grace will directly diminish the amount of apprehended evil, and increase the amount of perceived excellence. Whereas, invariably, the sinfulness of the heart is perceived more after conversion than before; and as the illumination of the Spirit increases, and the work of sanctification goes on, discoveries still more and more humbling are made of the deceitfulness of the heart.

5. Godly sorrow is indicated by its universality.

It has respect to all manner of sin. The heart is regarded as the fountain, but all the streams which flow from it, are contemplated with grief and aversion. So little does the penitent perform, of the much which he feels himself bound to do, that his sins of omission bring him daily with penitent confession to the throne of grace; while the much which is said and done amiss, creates sometimes doubts concerning the reality of his piety, and always that grief and shame which an ingenuous mind can not fail to feel in doing that which it "does not allow." Where can he look with complacency? His heart is deceitful and wicked, his thoughts are often vain, his best motives mingled with alloy, his best deeds polluted.

6. Another indication of godly sorrow is the constant resistance which is made to sin.

The penitent does not say, "I shall never be perfect; it is in vain, therefore, to resist evil. I must be saved by grace at last, and a few sins, more or less, will make but little difference in the account; I will therefore cease from the conflict." The awakened sinner may find striving irksome, and cease from exertion, and the false professor of the religion of Jesus may acquiesce in captivity to sin; but the true penitent can not be at peace with sin. The Spirit will strive against it. The law of his mind will war against it.

7. Godly sorrow is invariably productive of reformation.

Though the heart may not seem to grow better, it does in fact escape gradually from the dominion of sin, and come under the dominion of holiness.